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## Is American Youth Accepting Responsibility?

Moderator, GEORGE V. DENNY, JR.

### Speakers

EDWARD WEEKS

MERLE MILLER

### Interrogators

DOROTHY STRATTON

OSCAR HANDLIN



### THE LISTENER TALKS BACK

on

**"Is the Welfare State Fair to All?"**

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# Town Meeting

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## Is American Youth Accepting Responsibility?

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The account of the meeting reported in this Bulletin was transcribed from recordings made of the actual broadcast and represents the exact content of the meeting as nearly as such mechanism permits. The publishers and printer are not responsible for the statements of the speakers or the points of views presented.

### THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

**EDWARD WEEKS**—Editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*; author of forthcoming book, *Education of an Editor*. After graduation from Harvard University in 1922, Mr. Weeks spent a year doing graduate work at Cambridge University, England, and then became a manuscript reader and book salesman for Horace Liveright, Inc., New York City. Mr. Weeks' association with America's oldest magazine, began in 1924, when he became editor of the *Atlantic Monthly Press*. He has been editor of the venerable *Atlantic Monthly* since 1938. Mr. Weeks is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He has served as an overseer of Harvard College since 1945, and a trustee of Wellesley College since 1947. In addition to his forthcoming book, Mr. Weeks has written *This Trade of Writing*, 1935, and edited two anthologies, *Great Short Novels*, 1941, and *The Pocket Atlantic*, 1946.

**MERLE MILLER**—Author of *The Sure Thing* and *That Winter*; contributing Editor of *Argosy*; formerly Associate Editor of *Harper's Magazine*. Educated at the University of Iowa and the London School of Economics, Mr. Miller became a Washington correspondent for the *Philadelphia Record*. During the war he became well known as founder and editor of the Pacific edition and later the Continental edition of *Yank, The Army Weekly*. Returning to civilian life, Mr. Miller worked for *Time Magazine*, and until recently he was an editor of *Harper's Magazine*. In addition to his writing and radio activities, Mr. Miller is on the National Executive Board of P.E.N., is Secretary of the Authors' Guild, is active in several veterans' organizations, and was recently appointed an adviser of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists. He is author of *We Dropped The A-Bomb*. During the past year, he has written almost exclusively for the Army.

**DR. OSCAR HANDLIN**—Associate Professor of History, Harvard University; author of *The Uprooted*.

**DOROTHY STRATTON** — National Executive Director of Girl Scouts of America; former Director and Captain, Women's Reserves, U. S. Coast Guard (SPARS).

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# Is American Youth Accepting Responsibility?

## Announcer:

Tonight your Town Meeting is proud to originate from the 31st National Convention of the Girl Scouts of America. Five thousand of its delegates are assembled for this broadcast in Mechanics Hall in Boston. As the largest organization of its kind in the world, the Girl Scout membership now totals nearly 1,800,000. In a few months, the Girl Scouts will observe their fortieth anniversary of service to youth and to the Nation.

Its history of growth and development is convincing proof that the Girl Scout organization has become an integral part of American life—a symbol of faith in the future. Town Meeting salutes the public-spirited women who give unselfishly in their time and energy to serve as leaders of the Girl Scouts all over this country. We congratulate them on their great achievement and wish them continued success in the years ahead.

Now to preside over our discussion, here is the founder and moderator of America's Town Meeting of the Air, George V. Denny, Jr.

## Moderator Denny:

Good evening, neighbors. We are very happy to be the guests of the Girl Scouts of America tonight discussing this most important question, "Is American Youth Accepting Responsibility?" and we congratulate them on the theme of this convention, "Girl Scouts—a Growing Force for Freedom," but this is also a dangerous theme.

Freedom, as we have pointed out to you before, is dangerous because implicit in freedom is the right to make the wrong choice.

Implicit in freedom is the right to advocate and choose evil as well as good. Implicit in freedom is the right to make choices today which may lead to slavery tomorrow. So in a free world accepting responsibility is very serious business.

But is youth accepting responsibility today? That's the question we are putting before Mr. Miller and Mr. Weeks and all of you here tonight. And by youth, we mean young people between the ages of 12 and 21. Our first speaker, Merle Miller, is one of the outstanding young writers and critics of our day who founded and edited the Pacific edition of *Yank*, the army weekly. After the war, he continued his work writing and editing. He is the author of a book called *The Sure Thing* and one called *That Winter*, and now contributes regularly to *Argosy* magazine, for which he does a monthly column on books. Mr. Merle Miller, welcome back to Town Meeting. (Applause)

## Mr. Miller:

Well, first, let me commend the Girl Scouts in the theme they've chosen for this year's convention. It is, as you know, "Girl Scouts—a Growing Force for Freedom." It's a magnificent theme. And also, in October 1951, it is an extremely controversial one. Almost everybody knows by now that there are powerful enemies of freedom outside the United States. But too few people seem to realize that there is an equal threat inside our borders. Or if the second threat is recognized, most of us are unwilling to do anything about it.

The generation of which I'm a member, the one that fought the

Second World War, has not, I'm afraid, since that battle was won, set a very enviable example. And the young college men and women now in their late teens and early twenties aren't doing much better. Too many of us seem to be interested only in security for ourselves and unwilling to enter the painful struggle to create the kind of world in which security would be possible for everyone. And I mean spiritual as well as physical security.

As everybody knows, the front pages of each day's newspapers are dominated by the most terrifying headlines, but I think last May the *New York Times* printed the most disturbing of all. You may have read it. It read, "College Freedom Being Stifled by Students' Fear of Red Label." After a survey of seventy-two institutions, the *Times* had concluded, "A subtle, creeping paralysis of freedom of thought and speech is attacking college campuses in many parts of the country, limiting both students and faculty in the area traditionally reserved for free expression of knowledge and truth." Paralysis? Well, not long ago at Rutgers University, a large number of students refused to sign the anti-communist scroll being circulated by the Crusade for Freedom. Why? Because they were for communism? Oh, no! They were afraid of the words "crusade" and "freedom." You call that accepting responsibility, Mr. Weeks?

A few weeks ago, I spent some time at a small and once vigorous New England college. I asked some of the students if they'd read the *Times* story. They had. Had the sickly fear set in on their campus? Oh, yes, they said, only last year one of the editors of the undergraduate weekly had

been suspended. Why? Because he made a speech attacking loyalty oaths. Had there been any protests over the editor's suspension? No, the students said. It was too bad, they were sorry for him. "But," one nineteen-year-old sophomore boy declared, "even if I agreed with him, and I haven't yet made up my mind, it's not safe to kick up a fuss."

You call that accepting responsibility, Mr. Weeks? I felt then and feel now that a college sophomore, whether a boy or a girl, should have made up his or her mind about loyalty oaths. I felt then and I feel now that it isn't safe *not* to kick up a fuss about any violation of freedom anywhere. However, during the last two years, I've met frightened and indecisive and placid and apathetic young men and women like that on college campuses and, for that matter, in high schools all over the country.

Mr. Weeks will probably insist that we live in difficult times and he is right. We do. We used to have a saying in the Army when people complained. We'd say either, "Go see the chaplain," or "Things are tough all over."

Well, things have always been tough all over and they always will be. The question is whether the difficulties are used as an excuse or as a challenge. And as everybody knows, at the moment some men with small minds but large ambitions are building their own reputations by destroying the reputations of those with whom they disagree. Again, there have always been such men and there always will be, but they must be fought. And that battle is the especial responsibility of the young.

There has never been a time

when the soaring imagination, the vigorous energy, and the new and inevitably dangerous ideas of youth were more necessary. There has seldom been a time when they were less apparent. Freedom is expensive. In wartime, it is purchased with lives—young lives; in peace-time, the price must be paid with cool-headed courage.

Is American youth accepting that responsibility? My answer is an unhappy, reluctant, but emphatic no. (*Applause*)

**Moderator Denny:**

Thank you, Mr. Miller, for your challenging statement. We've waited for a long time to get our friend Edward Weeks to appear on Town Meeting and we are delighted that this provocative subject has gotten him out of the Editor's Chair of the *Atlantic Monthly*, where he is also writing a book called *The Education of an Editor*. Mr. Weeks has been with the *Atlantic Monthly* since 1924, two years after his graduation from Harvard University, and has been its editor since 1938. He is also chairman of the Peabody Awards Committee for the selection of the best radio programs each year which now includes television. Town Meeting is very proud of its two Peabody Awards, and Town Meeting is very happy indeed to welcome Edward Weeks to America's Town Meeting of the Air.

**Mr. Weeks:**

I agree with Mr. Miller when he says that freedom is expensive. I agree with him when he says that the defense of freedom is the urgent responsibility of youth. But I disagree with him when he says that young people are not responsible. I maintain that American youth today are

more vigilant, more aware of what they owe the country, than my generation was in 1910.

In 1910 I spent the summer in one of those sunny towns on the Jersey coast. Most of us at that time gave no thought to foreign affairs or national defense. We were just out for the fun. The spirit of the place was personified by a boy I shall call Tony. Tony was a Princeton sophomore, happy go lucky, a beautiful dancer, gay with the girls. I loved him. And I was shocked when I heard my mother criticize him.

"That boy Tony," she exclaimed. "He seems to think the world owes him a living." Of course I went to his defense. "No, your Mother's right," father said. "Tony may be attractive, but he hasn't much sense of responsibility." And just to round out that story, I should add that Tony went to pieces in the hard drinking of the 1920's.

I maintain that American youth has grown up to its responsibility the hard way. Here is what I mean by responsibility. There are four things which we should expect and do expect of a good American as he comes to the age of 21. First, the best education of which he is capable. Second, we expect him to get a job and be self-supporting as soon as possible. Third, we expect him to get married and have a family. And finally, we expect him to have faith—faith in God, faith in the country, faith in the dignity of man. I don't mean a quiescent faith. I mean the prompting to do something about it.

Measured by those four responsibilities, the American youth who came of age between 1940 and 1947 are surely one of the finest generations we have produced since the signing of the Declara-

tion. They were brought up in the Great Depression. They went to war before their education was complete, and many of them served four years in uniform.

When the war was over, one large group went back to college. Boy, were they good! Many of them had married and they lived in trailers and in cheese boxes, in one-room apartments. They lived on \$125 a month or less while the wives took care of the little kangaroos, did the washing, kept the place clean, and somehow managed to find time to attend courses on their own.

As to the veterans that did not go back to college, there were about 2 million who needed money on which to get a start. Two million veterans borrowed money from the Government and they bought houses, farms, or they used it to get a start in business. Ninety-nine and two-tenths per cent of those GI's are meeting their financial obligations today. Less than one per cent have defaulted.

So here, then, are the older brothers and sisters of the youth we're talking about. They fought for the country. They got their education. They have their jobs. They're raising their families. And all but a tiny fraction are paying back the money which gave them the start. I call that being responsible.

And then you come down to the level of the 17 year-olds or younger. And what do you find? Well, to judge from the headlines, you find dope fiends and sex plugs and wild drivers who will smash any car they can steal. But do we have to judge from the headlines? Must we condemn the honor system of West Point because about 4 per cent of the cadets there broke it? If you put big business or big government on the honor sys-

tem, would you get better than a 95 per cent integrity? The American family today is under an enormous strain. Yet, it is the foundation of our democracy, and I am confident that it will come through.

If you have any doubts about American youth, think of East Berlin and the 2 million parading youth there. Are they responsible? Our youngsters are not regimented but they are vigilant. They have served in disaster squads as the Girl Scouts did in the Texas city explosion. They are volunteering today for civil defense. But these kids are not motivated by hatred and belligerency. They would much rather work for conservation, for better race relations, for international friendship. Think of the work camps. Think of the camps that you yourself sponsor and think of the camps sponsored by the Friends and the Unitarians.

I have as much confidence in our youth today as I had in their older brothers and sisters ten years ago. (*Applause*)

#### **Moderator Denny:**

Thank you, Mr. Weeks. Now we have a fine representative American audience from every part of the United States including Hawaii and Alaska. But before we take the questions from this audience, we are going to have questions from our two distinguished interrogators — Miss Dorothy Stratton, the National Executive Director of the Girl Scouts of America, formerly head of the SPARS and Dean of women at Purdue University, and Dr. Oscar Handlin, Associate Professor of History at Harvard University and the author of *The Uprooted*, a novel published last week.

First, we'll hear from Miss Stratton.

**Miss Stratton:** Mr. Miller, I hate to heckle you tonight because I feel very sorry for you trying to defend the negative of this question, but you know you can't accept responsibility unless you get a chance. Now why do you blame the youngsters for not accepting the responsibility when we the adults won't let go and give them a chance?

**Mr. Miller:** Well, Miss Stratton, you are perfectly right. Before such an audience, a man is a cad who says anything about youth. (*Laughter*) However, I don't think, Miss Stratton, that adults have ever *given* youth responsibility. This is nonsense. This is the kind of thing that occurred in 19th Century novels. Youth has to *take* responsibility, and it causes a struggle, and I hope youth always wins. My only objection, you know, is that they aren't struggling anymore. I think that hardening of the mind sets in even quicker than hardening of the arteries, and it's probably not a bad idea, Miss Stratton, for youth to be wrong. Wasn't it the late Bernard Shaw who said of men, but it's certainly true of this generation, "History will condemn a man, not for being wrong, but for having no opinions." So I am simply exhorting youth, and as a matter of fact, their elders, too, to have more opinions—some of them wrong.

**Dr. Handlin:** I'd like to address this question to Mr. Weeks. Americans have long been accustomed to add to your list of four responsibilities a fifth, and that is the responsibility not to take for granted the kind of world their elders have made for them—responsibility to ask questions, to criticize, to laugh at the complacency of their elders. This re-

sponsibility in the past was embodied not only in political action in youth movements, but in the whole attitude toward the wisdom, the assumption of their elders. Do you see any evidence that youth today is living up to this responsibility?

**Mr. Weeks:** Yes, Mr. Handlin, plenty of it. You and Mr. Miller have both given me very happy clues. I'll take yours first and come to Mr. Miller if I can in just a minute. You probably read recently where we had an election in Boston. I don't mean to go into politics but just to say that there was a very exciting new yeast in this election called the New Boston Committee. It was run by a boy of 25 and there were 800 young volunteers in it, most of them of college or younger than college age. There were four paid employees in that 800, and they turned the vote, Mr. Handlin, not just with criticism but with determination. Their candidates all came through the primaries. It would be a very happy thing for Boston, I think, if they came through in November. Answer number one.

Answer number two is that reference of Mr. Miller's to these moribund New England universities or colleges. I don't know where he goes to spend his time. We both lecture, and perhaps he goes to the quieter ones. But I've been rather proud of the movement that has been quietly taking place and quietly engineered by the undergraduates themselves, and I mean making democracy work in clubs and fraternities. I saw the other day that a fraternity was expelled — *verboten* — because it had insisted on carrying through a pledge it made to a Negro three years ago. It insisted on keeping

him in the club and it withdrew from the national body.

That same thing has taken place at Amherst, and at both Harvard and Yale, and I am sure many of you know Negroes have been elected and will continue to be elected to the clubs—an unheard of thing in 1910 or perhaps even when Mr. Miller went to college.

**Mr. Denny:** Thank you, Mr. Weeks. Mr. Miller is far from moribund. He wants to talk to that question.

**Mr. Miller:** I am delighted to find that for the first time Mr. Weeks has come over more or less to my side. He has happily abandoned his original completely inadequate description of responsibility. I know he has, because he talked about, well, briefly, he talked about education, he talked about a man getting a job, being self-supporting, getting married, raising a family and having faith. I was reminded unhappily when Mr. Weeks was giving that inadequate description of responsibility of a lot of people I met in the spring of 1945—Germans these were—you'll pardon my being so old-fashioned. In the spring of 1945 I was in a little town called Weimar in Germany. Three miles outside of this town was that 20th Century monstrosity called, as you remember, Buchenwald. And the first question you always wanted to ask the people of Weimar was, did they know this was going on and did they feel any sense of responsibility for it. Their answers were always the same, Mr. Weeks. They said, "Oh, no, we're only small Nazis; we didn't have time; we didn't know it was there because we were getting educated; we were getting married and having a family; we were getting self-supporting." I

think the difference between a child and an adult is that adult accepts two responsibilities—one for himself and one for the society in which he lives. And the two examples, Mr. Weeks, you have happily just given do that.

**Mr. Denny:** Mr. Weeks, perhaps you had better come up and clarify your position.

**Mr. Weeks:** Well, I think it's a little unhappy to draw that comparison between the Americans and the Germans who were living in the neighborhood of Buchenwald. We haven't actually been exposed to quite that long subduing process known as Nazism, and we didn't have and we haven't yet and I don't think we will in the immediate future elect or choose or have given to us a Hitler.

I said I had faith and I wanted other people to have faith and it wasn't a quiescent faith—it was a meaning to get up and be counted and do something about it. I see and have seen quite a lot of it.

**Miss Stratton:** Mr. Miller, I was interested in your definition of responsibility. I had always thought that the essence of responsibility was knowing what the consequences of your act would be and being willing to accept those consequences. You don't mention that at all.

**Mr. Miller:** Of course I do. I just assume that when you get to be beyond—unfortunately this age always gets a little bit later in life. We had a little discussion this morning about what was youth and one of us who shall be nameless said that he thought people who got to be 21 from 1940 to 1947 were youth. Well, I never thought that at all. I think once you get beyond about 22, you may be young, but you aren't youth anymore.

I was in Texas a couple of weeks ago and spoke to a group of girls about the age of some of these Girl Scouts, and when I had finished one of the girls' first questions was, "Mr. Miller, how old are you?" And I said I was thirty and she said, "Mr. Miller, why are you middle-aged men so worried about war?" (*Laughter*) It depends on where you sit, but of course, responsibility means you make up your mind, and if you're wrong, you take the consequences. That's growing up. That's being adult. I take that for granted.

**Dr. Handlin:** I too feel that Mr. Weeks' comment represents a change in his position. It is difficult, however, to measure the degree to which young people are actually meeting this responsibility or are complacent in the face of it. The example he cited from Boston politics was interesting in a way, although it must be added that the candidates themselves who were running were all over 50—one of them in his 80's, I think—and that this kind of activity which seems so exceptional now was quite typical in the 30's and earlier. Now the sense of complacency I have criticized and Mr. Miller has criticized seems to me to be measurable in terms of the ideals that young people express. Do you see in those ideals and in the present expressions of those ideals a sense of this responsibility?

**Mr. Weeks:** Yes, I do, Dr. Handlin. Perhaps I see a select

group, because they come to me either for jobs or wanting to write for the *Atlantic Monthly*. This isn't a plug, of course, but I do see a lot of people. I have been seeing a lot of fellows as they got out of uniform and began to come in wondering what they would do next in life. It seemed to me that the most exciting thing in my talks with them was that they were not preoccupied with the idea—which would have been true of my generation—of how much salary they could get in the fastest measurable amount of time. They were chiefly concerned in getting a challenging job, in getting a job which they felt was constructive and in which they would contribute something. This, of course, is borne out by the facts in the colleges.

**Dr. Handlin:** The college generation of which you spoke with such approval has often been criticized for having accepted a hand-out psychology, for having become dependent on government aid and accustomed to receiving such assistance. Do you think their criticism is justified?

**Mr. Weeks:** No, I wouldn't say that it was a hand-out psychology to work with a man like Lilienthal or to work in the ECA or to work with the Atomic Energy Commission. I think these are all challenging jobs and anything but safe jobs if you can judge by the explosions coming out of Washington today.

# QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

*Mr. Denny:* Now we have some questions from the audience.

*Lady:* Mr. Miller, what happens to youth that causes them to want security ahead of the freedom that comes from gambling on one's own ability?

*Mr. Denny:* A \$64 question, Mr. Miller.

*Mr. Miller:* A \$64 question in—what do I get—30 seconds?

*Mr. Denny:* Go ahead. You've got two minutes.

*Mr. Miller:* Well, I think one thing that none of us has said, and Mr. Weeks didn't even say is that this is a generation which has never known security. Maybe it simply wants something it's never known, but believe me, if that's the only aim in life—we've been talking about the Government. The Government seems somehow now to have become unbelievably attractive. People are willing to work. This was a different college, Mr. Weeks, but I heard that in a college in the State of Washington about a month ago a boy who was an *A* student, a Phi Beta Kappa, said, "Well, I want to go to work for the Government because I know I'll get \$7500 a year, at least, for life." Well, I can think of no more uninspired society made up of 150 million people who want nothing more than to get \$7500 a year for the rest of their lives.

*Lady:* Mr. Weeks, due to world conditions and trends, are parents as confused as their children on how to cope with the problem of responsibility?

*Mr. Weeks:* Are they confused? I've never seen so much anxiety in the stream of general unsolicited manuscripts as I see today. I can

tell you this. About two years ago, when the size of our crisis really went home, death stalked through about two out of every four manuscripts you picked up. That kind of fearful thinking, I'm glad to say, has been diminishing, but the parents, if one can judge from these unsolicited manuscripts from men and women, are genuinely deeply concerned and troubled.

*Girl:* Mr. Weeks, to what degree is Senior Service Scouting helping youth to accept responsibility?

*Mr. Denny:* What do you know about Senior Service Scouting, Mr. Weeks?

*Mr. Weeks:* I assimilated very fast this afternoon, and I got kind of a very fast, quickie moving picture of what you are doing in conservation and in international friendships and in your exchange of scouts around the country; at this point, Miss Stratton, hadn't you better take over?

*Mr. Denny:* Miss Stratton, will you help us out?

*Miss Stratton:* Mr. Weeks, I should think the young lady who asked you the question would be the very best one to answer that question.

*Mr. Denny:* All right, young lady, what do you think?

*Girl:* Well, I think that Senior Service Scouts have certainly helped in all forms of community life throughout the Nation.

*Mr. Denny:* How?

*Girl:* They have worked as hospital aides, they have worked with crippled children in these hospitals, they have done ranger aid work, and conservation, and many

other activities that I'm not too familiar with.

*Mr. Denny:* And the Girl Scouts were the first ones on the job in the flood, weren't they? The Kansas City flood?

*Girl:* Yes.

*Lady:* Mr. Miller, are youth responsible for carrying out plans made by another generation, or should they not help make the plans and then carry them out?

*Mr. Miller:* Well, the answer to that question—that's the simplest question yet. They should pay no attention whatever to the plans their elders have had mapped out for them. For heaven's sake! Look at what our elders especially—you can say this to me, too—look at what we have done with the world. I hope the people in their teens, those in their teens, those who are Girl Scouts now, can do a better job of it. And I am convinced, you see, that they can if they just start right quick. Tomorrow afternoon will be too late.

*Lady:* Mr. Weeks, how can youth accept responsibility today if the parents will not let them carry responsibility? A youth leader may teach a girl to take responsibility in her troop meeting of an hour a week, but will that last if she cannot carry it home with her?

*Mr. Weeks:* Well, I think she has got to educate her parents then. And I think it is perfectly plausible that she can do so if she persists enough, because I think the parents in these days are much more accessible, much more malleable than they were in the days of "Clarence Day" and those four-headed Day boys who had to always accept that *don't*. Push them, insist, give them an incentive to let you have more latitude.

*Lady:* Mr. Miller, who do you think is responsible for the fact that young people are not accepting their full responsibility in the world today?

*Mr. Miller:* Well, I think we have covered that more or less. I think, in two sentences, that their parents are or that I am, or that everybody over 22 is, that everybody who should be grown up and adult is; and all I am doing is acting as a kind of Jeremiah—I hope not in the wilderness—exhorting you to do a better job than we did.

*Lady:* Mr. Weeks, our children today for the most part are brought up by their mothers. How can we alert our fathers to assume their responsibility? (*Applause, laughter*)

*Mr. Denny:* Papa Weeks?

*Mr. Weeks:* Well, if you could only turn your father into a fisherman, if you could only get him out of doors, if you could only get him away from the golf course for at least one day out of the week, you will have a chance to work with him. I was converted in 1937, and ever since then I have been much more accessible to my family, to my wife, and to my children, and I think I have a better idea of the country as a result, and I certainly have more affection on their part.

*Mr. Denny:* All right. Would any other fathers like to confess? No? All right. Now we'll take a question from the lady down here.

*Lady:* I'm from India. Mr. Miller, why do we adults presume that the young are intrinsically incapable and we intrinsically capable of evaluating their abilities?

*Mr. Miller:* I think that's an excellent question. And the answer is, "Heaven knows." You

know about the time you do all the things that Mr. Weeks pointed out—you start paying bills and you start raising a family and you start getting married and you become a respectable citizen—I certainly reversed the order—about the time you become a respectable citizen and think you know all the answers, your vision as each year goes on grows less. As a matter of fact, it's a particularly appropriate question for a young lady from India to ask because I don't think Americans generally—maybe particularly elders, but partly youth—realize that we've now grown into one world, realize that the problems of India are the same as ours. And I think the smug complacency again of those over 22 who we will assume for the moment are adults is all wrong.

*Lady:* How can we take responsibility when grown-ups won't even take the time to find out if we're capable?

*Mr. Weeks:* That's a very hard question, because if you are really stifled, if there is really no give at the other end, then you are forced to having to be a renegade and go out and seize it and really make yourself rebellious and very unhappy and probably you'll have to do that if it's as tough as that. I would recommend persuasion and the gentler forms of irritation which, after all, can be very skillfully practiced by the children in the family. If they are skillfully applied, those spurs, some of this callousness of the older generation, may be worn through. It's worth trying.

*Mr. Denny:* Remember, Mr. Weeks was converted by his own son.

*Lady:* My question is for Mr. Miller. Mr. Miller, does the youth of today spend too much time and

effort seeking for something, rather than thinking and taking an interest in world affairs?

*Mr. Miller:* Well, of course it does. No question. Now I did this, too. I just want you to be brighter than I was. It spends too much time thinking about—well, you think about who is going to be the date for next Friday's dance, and if he doesn't ask you you somehow subtly arrange for him to ask you. Well, don't think that I'm against your going to next Friday's dance. I'm all for it, but I'm also for the kind of world in which you can continue to have dances on Friday night, and thus I think maybe on Monday or Tuesday between the hours of 10 and 12 or perhaps even 12:30 people ought to start thinking about the kind of world they live in, probably find that lacking, and do something about it. It's as simple as that.

*Mr. Denny:* Or as complex. The lady here.

*Lady:* Mr. Weeks, how can our children learn responsibility if the Government teaches security from cradle to grave and assures insurance for unemployment, sickness, old age, education? (Applause)

*Mr. Denny:* The lady is not a member of the New Deal party.

*Mr. Weeks:* I gathered that. I think that craving, that desire on the part not only of the children, not only the younger generation but their parents, is the deep belief that goes straight back to the determination that we will not have another boom and bust in this country. We will not have another depression. And I think it's gone too far, but I certainly don't see any signs of a weakening of individuality on the part of the oncoming generation. I remember a superb letter that I saw

that was written by a boy towards the end of the war, and it ended up this way. He was describing the things he wanted to do and he said, "When I get out of the army I want to build a house, I want to water a lawn, I want to take a can of beer out of my refrigerator, I want to get elected to a school board, I want to dig my roots back and regain the feeling of continuity I lost a long time ago. Of course, when this weariness is past, I want to get back into the fight of which this war is just a military phase, for I have come to believe that the essential freedoms are not inalienable rights, but luxuries, and the price we must keep on paying for them is high." *(Applause)*

*Lady:* Mr. Miller, is it too much or too little responsibility that is causing drug addiction, basketball scandals and the like, in high schools and colleges today?

*Mr. Miller:* It's simple. Too little I think. Too little being accepted, none being given. I just want to make one other comment. I am delighted. It took almost 42 minutes, but from the time Mr. Weeks began until this moment he has made almost a complete swing. I detected in his last magnificent sentence in that letter from the ex-soldier that he now agrees that responsibility is much more than he had first thought. Now we all agree. I hope you do, too, incidentally.

*Mr. Denny:* Very good, Mr. Miller. Now the next question.

*Lady:* Mr. Weeks, our Senior Girl Scout program is built on service to others and on outdoor skills. What should we add to give girls more responsibility?

*Mr. Weeks:* If you could possibly begin to get them around

the country so that they see more of this magnificent country. I think the most beneficial thing you can possibly do to stir, to awaken the sense of real, nation-scale responsibility is to let them see how magnificent this country is and how it works. Make them travel. Take them on trips.

*Mr. Denny:* All right, thank you. One more question.

*Lady:* Mr. Miller, why doesn't the honor system work in more schools?

*Mr. Miller:* Why doesn't the honor system work in more schools? Because we live in a society in which honor is considered a luxury. I've just been up to West Point, I've just spent about three weeks there doing a magazine piece about it. We bring young men up there at the age of 17 to 18 to 22 in a society in which, for the most part, the ethic is to get by with as much as you can, and we certainly expect them at that age to begin living an honorable life when he or she goes to a civilian college. The thing we have to do is begin not at the age of 17, but at the age of 7 months, if possible. The thing we have to do is to live in a society in which morality and honor are not considered old fashioned, and if we do that, brother we'll have responsibility!

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you, Mr. Miller, thank you Edward Weeks, Dorothy Stratton, and Dr. Oscar Handlin, and thanks also to the capable officers and staff of the Girl Scouts of America whose splendid cooperation made this program possible. We haven't solved the program for you by any manner of means. Now it's up to you. So plan to be with us next week and every week at the sound of the Crier's Bell.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Now that you have read the opinions of both speakers on the subject, "Is American Youth Accepting Responsibility?" you are probably ready to draw your own conclusions. Before doing so, however, you may want to consider the following background questions.

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1. If youth is not accepting responsibility, is it the fault of youth itself or the fault of adult leadership?
  - a. Do adults expect too much of youth? Or not enough?
  - b. Do adults give youth as much responsibility as youth is able to accept?
  - c. Must responsibility be given by adults, or taken by youth?
2. Does the increase in juvenile delinquency (drug addiction, sex clubs, etc.) indicate that youth is not accepting responsibility?
  - a. Or is it an indication that parents are not accepting their responsibilities?
3. Has the increased life expectancy in America and the availability of more older people for positions of leadership decreased youth's opportunity to assume responsibility?
4. Do parents want youth to accept responsibilities early, or do they want their children to have an "easier life" than they themselves had?
5. Is the second World War producing a "lost generation" as the first World War did?
6. Do we discipline our children too much or not enough?
  - a. Does discipline discourage initiative or provide a guide to future conduct?
7. Is modern youth too conservative or too liberal?
  - a. Are they interested in the social and intellectual issues of our age or inclined to be apathetic about them?
  - b. Are they too interested in themselves and in achieving "happiness"?
8. Are our boys and girls too concerned with security and unwilling to take a risk, or are they ready to seek new adventures and opportunities in an expanding world?
  - a. Do the current scandals in Government discourage youth from going into Government work and assuming the responsibility for making improvements in political and community life?
9. Do our young people make their opinions count in their communities and in state and national affairs?
  - a. Do our leaders consult youth when planning social changes?

# THE LISTENER TALKS BACK

## "IS THE WELFARE STATE FAIR TO ALL?"

Program of October 9, 1951

### Speakers

Senator Richard Bolling

Dr. Ruth Alexander

Each week we print as many significant comments on the preceding Tuesday's broadcast as space allows. You are invited to send in your opinions, pro and con, not later than Thursday following the program. It is understood that we may publish any letters or comments received.

### SINCERITY AND TRUTH

Warmest congratulations to the able Senator Humphrey (for) his cold, superb logic, forthright sincerity . . . (and) blunt truth, so ably presented.—HARRY J. HUBER, Pico, California.

Dr. Alexander's arguments against the Welfare State had sincerity, truth, and true Americanism to make her the winner.—ADELAIDE LARISH, Chicago, Illinois.

### THEN AND NOW

"Common welfare" as used by our forefathers referred to the "common good," not the welfare associated with charity or free handouts. Early Americans experimented with the Welfare State and, finding it unworkable, dissolved it. The complaint was that no one wanted to work, or rather that enough people refused to work to make it unbearable for those who were industrious.

Of course, there are more independent businesses today. There is more of almost everything, including public debt and crime. With the increase in population, everything increases. There is more beef, too, but less of it reaches the individual's mouth.—LOIS A. BERNARD, Tucson, Arizona.

There are fewer bankruptcies since fewer people dare risk going out for themselves now. Taxes leave small margins for development.

There are more people, so of course more businesses — BUT nearly everyone I know is in financial trouble—MRS. I. C. TWEEDIE, Houston, Texas.

I have a man in my employ who has been with me 25 years. He lived better when he was getting \$18 per week than now on \$50 per week. Our farmers and I in my business would be better off without subsidies. Who's paying for these but our farmers and consumers and the people who are buying bonds?—J. JACOB TSCHUDY, Monroe, Wisconsin.

### TWENTIETH CENTURY REPUBLICANISM

I was astonished at Dr. Alexander's speech . . . . Someone should inform her that this is the twentieth century, not the eighteenth. I have for fifty years always voted Republican and I have several objections to the present government, but if my party would advocate something like Dr. Alexander's suggestions, I and millions of other died-in-the-wool Republicans would leave the party.—O. F. EARLANDSON, Valparaiso, Indiana.

### BIG AND LITTLE FELLOWS

It is strange but true that the greatest opponents of the Welfare State are the greatest benefactors of this same Welfare State. The

National Real Estate Board and all the other real estate boards throughout the country receive great benefits from the FHA and other Government agencies. . . . Regardless of how bitter they may be of the Welfare State for the "little fellow," (they) would shriek to high Heaven if the Welfare State to them were to be cut off.—WILLIAM D. TURNER, Lexington, Ky.

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

My experience with the Welfare State hasn't been too satisfactory. I have been confined to a wheelchair for 35 years and am totally disabled. . . . I have no means of support and no close relatives to take an interest in my survival.

Through the kindness and generosity of friends I have managed to keep out of the poorhouse. I live alone and do my own cooking and housekeeping and live as meagerly as anyone in Germany or Russia. The price of meat doesn't bother me because I couldn't buy it at half price. While the U. S. Government sends billions abroad, there are many half-starving people here at home.

The Federal Government passed a law to help disabled people, but the state must pay half, and it is doubtful if Florida will ever pass the appropriation to meet the Federal grant.

In the meantime, out of funds I do not have, I must pay Federal and state sales taxes on many things I must buy.—JAMES CULUM, St. Petersburg, Florida.

I am one of the self-employed people who are strong believers in the New Deal, Fair Deal, Welfare State, or whatever anyone may call the policies of the Government for the past 20 years.—EARL B. COATS, Havana, Illinois.

We are small business people and are finding it increasingly difficult to survive under the so-called Welfare State. Our competition comes from a government subsidized cooperative. In our small town we see an increasing trend toward a "squeeze out" of independent grocers. Two of our largest grocers have been forced to join with small chains in order to compete. — MARY LOU VAN SCOY, Candor, New York.

#### ERRATA

In the October 9 Bulletin, page 4, column 2, lines 24-25 should read "to insure *votes* in the future" rather than "to insure *both* in the future."

Line 47 in the same column should read "For the State cannot even pay its own way." (*new sentence*) rather than "but the State cannot even pay its own way."

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